

IV. *An Account of the Dead Bodies of a Man and Woman, which were preserved 49 Years in the Moors in Derbyshire; being part of a Letter from Dr. Charles Balguy of Peterborough, to Cromwell Mortimer, M. D. R. S. Sec.*

IT is very common to see dead Bodies which have been preserved by Art for many Ages: But that they should lie unchanged by means of the Soil only in which they were interred, will appear strange to most People; nor should I have taken upon me to relate it, had it not happened in the Neighbourhood where I was born; and that I had an Opportunity therefore of informing myself well concerning it.

The Persons of whom you have the following Account were lost in a great Snow on the *Moors*, in the Parish of *Hope*, near the *Woodlands* in *Derbyshire*, *January* the 14th, 1674; and not being found 'till the 3d of *May* following (the Snow lasting probably the greatest part of that Time) they then smelt so strong, that the Coroner ordered them to be buried on the Spot. The Man's Name was *Barber*; he had been a considerable *Grafter*, and was well known by the People that found him: but being reduced in his Circumstances, was then going off with his Servant-Maid for *Ireland*. They lay in the Peat-Moss 28 Years 9 Months before they were looked at again, when some Countrymen, having observed, I suppose, the extraordinary Quality of this Soil in preserving dead Bodies from corrupting, were curious enough to open the Ground to see if these Persons had been so preserved, and found them

no way altered, the Colour of their Skin being fair and natural; their Flesh soft as that of Persons newly dead. They were afterwards exposed for a Sight 20 Years, though they were much changed in that time, by being so often uncovered; and in the Year 1716, Dr. *Bourn* of *Chesterfield* was there, who gave me this Account of the Condition they were then in, *viz.* The Man perfect, his Beard strong, and about a  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an Inch long, the Hair of his Head short, his Skin hard and of a Tann'd-leather Colour, pretty much the same as the Liquor and Earth they lay in: He had on a Broad-cloth Coat, which he tried to tear a Skirt off, but could not. The Woman, by some rude People had been taken out of the Ground, to which one may well impute her greater Decay; one Leg was off, the Flesh decayed, the Bone sound, the Flesh of one Hand decayed, the Bone sound; on her Face, the upper Lip, the Tip of her Nose decayed, but no where else. Her Hair was long and springy as that of a living Person. He took out one of the Fore-Teeth, the upper Part of which, as far as was contained in the Socket, was as elastic as a piece of Steel; and, being wrapp'd round his Finger, sprung again to its first Form; but this Power was lost in a few Minutes after it had been in his Pocket.

Mr. *Barber* of *Rotheram*, the Man's Grandson, was at the Expence of a decent Funeral for them at last in *Hope* Church, where upon looking into the Grave some time afterwards, it was found they were entirely consumed.

Mr. *Wermald* the Minister of *Hope* was present when they were removed: He observed that they lay about a Yard deep, the Soil or Moss moist, but

no Water stood in the Place at all. He saw their Stockings drawn off, and the Man's Legs, which had never been uncovered before, were quite fair; the Flesh, when pressed with his Finger, pitted a little, and the Joints played freely and without the least Stiffness: The other Parts were much decayed: What was left of their Cloaths (for People had cut away the greatest part to carry Home as a Curiosity) was firm and good; the Woman had on a piece of new Serge, which seemed never the worse.

These are all the Particulars of moment which my Friends, who saw them at this distance of Time, are able to recollect. The Thing is certainly very remarkable, as there are no Means known (I believe) of preserving dead Bodies so well. I leave People to please themselves, by making their own Observations upon it; though some time or other, when I have Opportunity and Leisure to furnish myself with the necessary Experiments, I may trouble you again on this Subject.

V. *An Account, by Dr. Richard-Middleton Massey, of a Book, entitled Locupletissimi Reurm Naturalium Thesauri, accurata Descriptio, &c. Vol. I. Amstel. 1734. in Fol. An exact Description of the principal Curiosities of Nature, in the large Museum of Albertus Seba, F. R. S. Vol. I. Amsterdam, 1734.*

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